

State Panel of Personal Assistance Work Groups

RECOMMENDATIONS

for the

State Personal Assistance Oversight Committee

10 December 2009

Background:

The State Panel of Personal Assistance Work Groups was organized in 2009 as part of a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. The members of the Statewide Panel are citizens from every Idaho region; we are Idahoans with disabilities who employ personal assistants, and Idahoans who are employed as personal assistants. We and the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services recognize that access to quality personal assistance services is crucial for Idahoans with disabilities seeking and maintaining competitive employment in our communities.

The mission of the Panel is:

- To identify and promote constructive ideas to improve working conditions for Personal Assistance Services (PAS) employees and encourage professionalism, recruitment, and retention.

The goals of the Panel are:

- To carry recommendations from three regional PAS work groups. Regional PAS work groups are composed of personal assistants and personal assistance services consumers; the mission of the work groups is to identify and promote constructive ideas to improve working conditions for PAS employees and encourage professionalism, recruitment, and retention, and to address issues affecting PAS working and hiring conditions by formulating constructive recommendations.
- To organize and present those recommendations to the State Personal Assistance Oversight Committee, a statutory body per Idaho Code 39-5609, and other public policy groups.

The following five recommendations were formally adopted by the State Panel of Personal Assistance Work Groups, and are presented to the State Personal Assistance Oversight Committee:

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Recommendation A:

That Division of Medicaid staff, Centers for Independent Living who provide Fiscal Intermediary services, people who use self-directed care, and advocates develop a solid partnership that incorporates a philosophy of teamwork and cooperation to improve home and community-based services and State Plan waivers in Idaho. Any rule or statute change shall be worked on cooperatively, prior to publication, with all concerned parties to facilitate a partnership between government and the people whom they serve. Encouraging public input in all phases of government must be embraced with a positive attitude.

Recommendation B:

That the Division of Medicaid and State Personal Assistance Oversight Committee formally recognize the importance of continuing to provide people who use personal assistance services an array of choices to direct their own care, as every single person is unique; that the Division of Medicaid and State Personal Assistance Oversight Committee recognize that we may be categorized as having the same disability but our self-care needs are different; therefore, personal assistance programs must protect the individual right to self-direct our own care at the level that we choose, and to live where we choose.

Recommendation C:

That the Division of Medicaid and State Personal Assistance Oversight Committee address the importance of coordinated training for regional managers and nurses, by establishing a partnership with the Statewide Panel of Personal Assistance Work Groups to provide a consistent Medicaid staff training which emphasizes (1) the history and philosophy of Independent Living, (2) the difference between self-directed and medical-directed models, and (3) the services and activities that Centers for Independent Living offer.

Recommendation D:

That the Division of Medicaid shall not develop or adopt quality assurance measures without formal participation by the State Personal Assistance Oversight Committee; that the Division of Medicaid will differentiate

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between traditional agency-directed service and self-directed service models, and ensure that regional Medicaid staff address consistently self-directed participants as individuals directing their own care, and not as a consumers of agency-directed services.

Recommendation E:

That the Division of Medicaid and State Personal Assistance Oversight Committee increase public knowledge about the about the availability of personal assistance services and opportunities for employment in the personal assistance workforce, by validating the personal assistance field as an acceptable and respected form of employment, by formally recognizing the importance of a living wage and benefits for retaining quality personal assistants and ensuring the quality of personal assistance services.

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